



REMOVING WEEDS IS NOT CULTIVATION

(Written Specially For The Bulletin.)

Now that the drouth has been broken and we are getting rain in plenty, our old friends, the weeds, have taken a fresh start. "Thunder-mighty," as they say on Cape Cod, but aren't they growing!

The chickweed on the asparagus bed is a deep-piled green carpet through which the asparagus shoots have to fairly punch their way up towards the surface.

The quack-grass among the corn and narrow beans is growing like mad, above ground and below.

Among the melons and kukes, young amaranth and pigweed and ragweed colonies are establishing themselves every hour.

Everywhere pigweed sprouts are beginning to tint the surface with a reddish flush.

Now, I am not in the habit of waiting for the weeds to get into vigorous life. The gardens have been harrowed and cultivated and hoed, incessantly, ever since the rowing began to show. But for the past few days the rains have been so frequent that there hasn't been much chance for that sort of work. One must wait a little after a soaking rain for the top soil to dry off. He can't do good work stirring up mud. And when the second rain comes along, before the first has dried, and the third before the second has dried, it is out of the way, then one has to wait the weeds grow with such patience as he may happen to have on hand.

It has been said, over and over again, that weeds are really the farmers' friends, since they drive him to cultivate when, without them, he might neglect the crops. Like all old sayings, there is a germ of truth in this.

But don't make the mistake of thinking that killing weeds is cultivation. Of course, you can't go through a field with a cultivator or horse-hoe to tear up the weeds without doing some incidental cultivation of the soil and the plants. But it is purely incidental. It becomes a mere side issue. It's a sort of by-product of your work.

Which is putting the thing exactly wrong and so.

For cultivation—cultivation of the soil for the sake of the plants, is of vastly more importance to good agriculture than the mere killing of weeds.

Don't mistake me as underrating the pesky nature of weeds. When allowed to grow thick and rank, they not only shade and smother the crop, but they take away from it the fertility which you have laboriously and expensively dosed the soil with for the crop's use. They are pillagers, pilferers, pick-pockets, thieves who deserve and should be shown no consideration. Their one particular ambition seems to be to hurry and make seeds, this year, to bother folks with next year and the years after.

But—

Pesky and pernicious though they are, their mere removal and eradication is, nevertheless, not so essential to the welfare of planted crops as the cultivation of those crops and the tilage of the soil around and among them.

Cultivation is a positive and affirmative sort of work, done for the benefit

of the planted crop. Killing weeds is a rather negative and destructive work, designed mainly to prevent them from robbing the planted crops. Killing weeds is fighting your enemies; cultivation is helping your friends. It is doubtless a good—anyway it is a necessary thing to kill off one's vegetable enemies; but it is a more satisfactory and effective thing to nourish and foster and feed one's plant friends.

Cultivation begins before the weeds show themselves. It is not principally intended for their injury, but chiefly for the good of the planted crops. It begins with the first hoeing, and it continues to the last hoeing, and it is a much more effective control of the weeds themselves. For the best time to kill weeds is before they come up, while they are just "a-bonin'." The stirring of the surface which is done when the weed-seeds have barely sprouted and haven't quartered an inch of stem and root combined is ample to stop their careers, right then and there. When they have had opportunity to establish themselves, to push their stakes well above ground and drive their roots deep towards the subsoil, then the same stirring, instead of killing them simply serves to encourage them and nerve them to a fresh start.

Instead of making cultivation a secondary matter incidental to weed-killing, good tillage makes weed-killing the secondary matter incidental to plant cultivation.

Just to state the case is to demonstrate the reasonableness of this method. Practice shows that it is not only reasonable in theory but that it works out with effectiveness.

Sometimes I notice a curious tenderness of some farmers in their dealing with their dirt about their plants. I've seen some act as if they thought the dirt would hurt the plants. They are afraid to throw it up close to them, especially afraid to let any of it get on the leaves.

Well, plants grow in dirt and live off it and it is to help them. Indeed, there are some crops which actually burying under fresh dirt seems to stimulate.

It's a frequent practice with me, when early garden peas first come up, to run a cultivator through them in such a way as to throw a spray of loose dirt directly on them, often quite burying them from sight. It doesn't hurt them at all. It does them good. It seems to brace them up, this shower-bath of fresh soil, as much as a shower-bath of fresh cool water does a tired and grimy man.

Sometimes with some crops, what might be thought even a harsher treatment is a tonic medicine. This past spring, when my early potatoes were from two to four inches out of the ground, there came the threat of a heavy rain. They had been cultivated and the soil about them was walking horse, and went through those potatoes like a gale of wind through a fan. The potato-tops were completely buried, most of them, when we got through. Where an extra sturdy one showed a bit of green sticking out

of the ridge we hauled dirt over it with hand hoes. When we got through the green row of potatoes had disappeared. Instead were bare ridges of dirt. The plants were completely submerged, covered up, buried.

Next morning there was not only a frost, but a freeze. Water had ice on it thick as window-glass, and the ground, even, was frozen so one could pick up the surface in pan-cakes. But those potatoes weren't frozen; weren't frosted; didn't even seem to have had their feelings hurt. It wasn't three days before they were up and growing again, to the last Murphy of them, and growing with a vigor and lushness which they hadn't shown before.

Tomatoes, also, will stand a lot of burying. Like other folks, I suppose, I often have to set out some long-stalked, spindly tomato plants, grown in the cold-frame and with mighty small root development, considering their height. Such plants I set very deeply, often burying three-quarters of their green stalks and leaving little besides the leaves above ground. Under this seemingly harsh treatment they usually do exceedingly well. What had been stalk promptly transforms itself into root and takes up the functions of a tap-root, sending out rootlets instead of branches and leaf-stems. Once they get started, such plants sprout ahead faster than the most carefully treated and coddled potted plants in the next row.

Of course plants differ, like animals, and each variety must be treated according to its habits and tendencies. It might not do to bury four-inch high corn under dirt as a protection against frost. But, taking the average run, we're all of us more apt to stunt them on dirt than to over-dose them with it.

Perhaps I'm wrong, but thus far my experience leads me to suspect that we can't cultivate too much, even if we should try.

They used to say that plenty of snow in the winter was "the poor man's manure." Persistent tillage in the spring and summer is certainly worth as much as a good deal of manure, and worth more than a great many barrels of water in a dry time. Constant stirring of the soil seems to enable it to absorb from the air something which plants want. At the same time the maintenance of a loose dirt mulch on the surface conserves the subterranean moisture while acting as a sponge to hold that of any light shower or even ordinary dew.

Another thing: while the cultivator and the weeder and the horse-hoe are excellent devices to kill weeds, the very best way to conquer them is to let the crop do for us. Two things can't occupy the same place at the same time. If by cultivation and tillage it is possible to urge the planted crops along into luscious and greedy growth, they'll outpace and overcome most of the weeds. Weeds are not apt to trouble a buckwheat field much. This isn't as certain, people hint, because buckwheat is "poison" to weeds, but because it grows so rapidly and thickly that they haven't a chance for their lives. The grain beats them at their own game.

Some other crops, when they are little and feeble, need careful tillage to urge them along. But when they are able to take care of themselves. When they've reached that point, they're generally able to take care of the weeds, too.

THE FARMER.

LETTERS FROM TWO STATES

Windham County DAYVILLE

Miss Violet Atherton of Honolulu, is visiting her aunt, Mrs. C. A. Downe. The Ladies' Aid Society met with Mrs. Harry Brainerley, Tuesday afternoon.

Mrs. Roy Spaulding and son Philip are visiting Mrs. A. E. Darling. Mrs. Lewis Gross and son Donald are with Mrs. Mary A. Street Jr. for the week.

Mrs. Fannie Bennett is ill at her home on High street. Judge and Mrs. Sablin S. Russell witnessed the boat races Friday.

Caleb Blanchard and Miss May Blanchard are guests of Mrs. Charles Vincent at Groton.

Mrs. Irving Blanchard is slightly improved from her severe illness. Thomas Coffey of Attawapung is the new clerk in the court.

William N. Burnett spent the week-end with E. J. Burnett. Miss Lena Tripp is spending the summer at Spruce lodge, with her grandmother.

Mrs. W. C. Darrow was in Worcester, Wednesday. George Gay started the foundations for two new houses.

Mrs. C. A. Russell was in Hartford, Tuesday. Walter Brainerley is entertaining guests from Potter Hill, R. I.

WILSONVILLE

Mr. and Mrs. Upham spent Sunday in Webster with Mr. Upham's brother and sister-in-law.

Mrs. S. Adams was a Worcester visitor one day the past week. Miss Jack entertained friends from Webster Saturday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Huntington of East Thompson were visitors Tuesday night with C. A. Kelly and family.

Misses "Carving" and "Visiting" her aunt in New Boston for a few days. Mrs. John Smith, who was taken to Memorial Hospital last week for treatment, is quite comfortable.

POMFRET CENTER

Mrs. Charles P. Gosvenor has been visiting in Mystic. Arthur Grosvenor was in Hartford Thursday.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett E. Brown attended the Yale-Harvard boat race in New London. A number from this region attended Old Home week in Willimantic.

Toiland County

MANSFIELD CENTER

Monday evening the Grange gave a strawberry supper and an open meeting with H. H. Spooner of the Connecticut Temperance Union giving a fine address here Sunday morning.

Mansfield Hollow Sunday school held its Children's day exercises Sunday afternoon. After the program Mr. Spooner spoke to the children.

Scout Patrol

A Boy Scout patrol has been organized with A. W. Buchanan Jr. as scout master.

Miss Florence Olin, who has been teaching in Montville the past year, is at her home here.

To Celebrate Fourth. A Fourth of July celebration is being planned which will be bigger and better than in previous years.

Mrs. E. G. Summers is in Dayton, Ohio, at the home of his grandparents. Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Summers, for a few days.

Colonel James of New Britain is spending a few days with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Albert James.

COVENTRY

Ready Helpers Give Amusing Play—Dr. Norman Bailey Leaves \$100 to Cemetery Association.

The Ready Helpers gave a strawberry supper Wednesday evening. For entertainment they gave two short plays—Uncle Hiram's Cold, and What Became of the False Teeth? The hall was well filled.

Edwin Maskell cut off the end of his little finger with a moving machine. The meeting of the Coventry Association is to be held next Tuesday evening.

Request to Coventry Association. The Coventry Cemetery Association has received \$100 from the State. Dr. Norman Bailey, of Haverstraw, N. Y., for the perpetual care of the family lot.

Miss Hulme Brooklyn, N. Y., is visiting at Mrs. Faulkner's.

STORRS

The college dormitories are being renovated in preparation for the State Summer school, which will commence Tuesday, July 6.

Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Jarvis of Washington, D. C., were recent callers here. Mr. and Mrs. Karl Musser are keeping house in Mr. Baker's house on Faculty Row.

Professor and Mrs. E. E. Egan are spending

ing a part of their vacation in Worcester, N. Y. Mrs. Merkle and children are visiting G. H. Lamson.

STAFFORD

Masons to Attend Universalist Service—Double Wedding, with Morning-Sisters as Bride.

I. P. Booth and Paul Booth were guests of relatives in Springfield last week. Mrs. Kate Findlesen of Springfield is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Brown.

Miss Mabel Brooks of Watertown, Mass., is visiting Miss Julia Loughlin in Stafford.

Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Pinney of New York were guests of Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Pinney over the week-end.

Rev. George L. Thompson and family are guests of Mrs. Emily Thompson, who has sufficiently recovered from her severe illness to return to her home.

The place known as the Reuben Burley place has been sold to Mrs. Emily Thompson, who will occupy it. Mrs. Rachel Burley attended the graduating exercises of the Connecticut Institute for the Blind at Hartford, Tuesday.

Masons to Attend Church. The lodge of F. & A. M. will be given of the Universalist church next Sunday morning, attending the morning service in a body.

Miss Ruth Pinney of Springfield attended the wedding of Miss Helen Wiseman returned with her last Monday and will her guest for a few days.

Miss Annie Brown returned last Thursday from her duties as a commercial teacher at Prequee Lake. She is at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Brown.

Graduated From School for Blind. Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Lashbury, attended the graduating exercises of the school for the blind at Hartford Tuesday. Robert Kelly formerly a Stafford boy, was one of the graduates.

Mrs. Sarah Black has returned with a visit with her daughter, Miss Margaret, at Pemaquid, Me. The honor place in the graduating class of the Pinney grammar school is held by Agnes Cunningham. Miss Cunningham has also won the year prize in spelling.

Double Wedding. A double wedding was witnessed by a large number of relatives and friends in St. Edward's church Sunday morning, when Edward Rabideau, son of Mr. and Mrs. De Buys of that city, the property known as the Madison Woodard place located at a point known as Woodard Hill, near the Lake. The property was bought by Mr. De Buys some years ago for use as a summer residence. The location is most desirable.

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COLUMBIA Miss Porter Attending Silver Bay Conference—S. B. West at Army and Navy Club Banquet.

Rev. E. O. Foster closed his three years' pastorate at the Congregational church Sunday and left with his family Monday for his new field of labor at Essex Junction, Vermont.

At Silver Bay Conference. Miss Harriet K. Porter of Wellesley College, who is spending the vacation with her parents in this place, is at present attending the Students' conference of the Young Women's Christian Association at Silver Bay, which began June 18 and closes the 28th.

It is reported that the property known as the Simon Hunt place in Pine street, has again changed owners.

Last Saturday afternoon the local nine was defeated here by the Lebanon 8 to 0.

Miss Leone Clark of Willimantic spent a portion of last week with her sister, Mrs. Clair Robinson.

Mrs. Gillette, who has been spending several weeks with the family of H. W. Porter, has returned to Lebanon.

Dr. and Mrs. S. A. Little and Mr. and Mrs. Frank S. Flag and daughters, Elizabeth and Virginia, of Hartford, motored to Columbia Sunday, and spent the day with the doctor's parents, Mr. and Mrs. James P. Little.

Mrs. William P. Johnson has been spending a few days with relatives in East Hartford.

An addition to the list of automobile owners in town is Charles Palmer of Chestnut Hill.

Attended Reunion. S. B. West, a veteran of the Civil War attended the annual reunion and banquet of the Army and Navy club of which he is a member, at Eastern Point.

The local ball team is to play the Lebanon nine at Lebanon this (Saturday) afternoon.

Mrs. James P. Little spent Thursday and Friday with the family of her son, Dr. S. A. Little.

Boys Property. It is reported that Elbert C. Little, formerly of this place, but for many years past connected with Straight University, in New Orleans, has purchased of Mr. De Buys of that city, the property known as the Madison Woodard place located at a point known as Woodard Hill, near the Lake. The property was bought by Mr. De Buys some years ago for use as a summer residence. The location is most desirable.

STAFFORDVILLE Miss Ruth Rosworth is ill. Mrs. Clarence Turner has been visiting her brother in Allston, Mass.

Mr. and Mrs. Allison Lyon have commenced housekeeping in Mrs. Vail's house.

John Morrell and Mr. and Mrs. L. Allard visited Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Wilson in Worcester, Mass., last Sunday.

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